



US Army Corps  
of Engineers

Vol. 27 Issue 9  
October 2006

Huntsville Center

# Bulletin

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*Mark your  
calendar now...*

**Combined  
Federal Campaign  
Center Kickoff**  
Oct. 4, 10 a.m.  
Cafeteria



**NSPS Town Hall  
Meeting with  
commander  
Oct. 5  
Cafeteria**  
**8:30 a.m. - 1st Floor  
employees**  
**10:00 a.m. - 2nd Floor  
employees**  
**12:00 p.m. - 3rd Floor  
employees**



Courtesy photo

A worker installs photovoltaic solar panels on Bldg. 1350 at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The panels augment electricity from the local power company and are saving the installation nearly \$6,000 a month in energy costs.

## Solar panels help cut energy costs at Fort Sam Houston

**By Debra Valine  
Public Affairs Office**

**S**an Antonio, Texas, gets plenty of sunshine so why not convert that natural power to usable energy? Solar power creates green energy. It's good for the environment and saves money.

Bldg. 1350 at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio

now uses a 180 kilowatt-hour photovoltaic (PV) solar panel system to augment electricity from the power company. It's saving the installation nearly \$6,000 a month in energy costs, and provides clean energy, no carbon dioxide emissions and less dependence on foreign oil.

The solar panels produce DC electricity and route it through an inverter where it

is turned into AC energy that is accessible to anyone on the power grid in San Antonio. Once on the grid, the solar energy is used just like electricity that comes from the power company; this just comes from the sun. It is seamless to the end user.

The project is part of the Energy Conservation Investment Program (ECIP). Funding comes

**See Solar Panels on page 9**

# Commander's thoughts

October is a month of challenges and opportunity. The annual Combined Federal Campaign will start Oct. 9 and it challenges us to exceed last year's contributions. The goal for the Huntsville Center this year is \$79,818. I encourage each of you to consider giving, even if it is just \$1, to one of the many charities offered through CFC. I personally challenge this organization to not only exceed last year's contributions, but also to exceed the number of contributors. As someone new to this organization, I can say that one of its outstanding characteristics is the people. We are a small organization, but we have one of the highest percentages of giving for this area — last year it was 47.6 percent. Let's take this opportunity and show everyone again this year what a great place Huntsville Center is. We have several CFC events planned in October beginning with our CFC kickoff at 10 a.m. Oct. 4 in the cafeteria, so please join in the fun while you are helping others.

October marks the beginning of the new fiscal year, 2007. I want to thank everyone for a successful close-out of FY06. The hard work and extra effort you all made is appreciated by the Army, Corps Headquarters, Huntsville Center leadership and your co-workers. The new fiscal year holds many challenges including Military Construction (MILCON) Transformation and Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). But this is an opportunity to show our skills and expertise, and our ability to get the job done.

October is also when we begin our orientation and training that will lead to our implementation of the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) in January 2007. I will host town hall meetings for everyone on Oct. 5, and the following two weeks will include training for all supervisors and employees. NSPS is another great

opportunity. It will ensure "equity and consistency" (which will be our mantra) for our organization. NSPS is designed for increased feedback

between supervisors and employees, and is a win-win situation for an organization like ours — one that thrives on extraordinary employees. I encourage everyone to embrace the challenges and opportunities NSPS offers.

I have spent my first 60 days learning about Huntsville Center, and I am excited about the future.

Our mission is unique, but so is one of our biggest customers — the Corps. Our mission works at various levels in the Corps, but one factor is consistent: It complements the missions of the divisions and districts. We also contribute to the Corps' overarching mission — to win the Global War on Terrorism and transform our Army



Col. Larry D. McCallister

See Commander on page 3

## Hails and farewells

### Welcome to new employees

... Patrice J. Arvie, Information Management Directorate; Roy W. Moon and Gregory S. Vaughn, both with the Chemical Demilitarization Directorate; Ryan A. Black, Office of Counsel; and Jackie G. Smith, Ordnance and Explosives Directorate. Welcome back David Michael Bond, Contracting Directorate; Lisa D.

Gayman, Office of Counsel; and Carlton K. Mason, Management Review Office.

**Farewell to** Emily Baine, Office of Counsel; James Brewer, Project Management Directorate; Jim Cox, Business Management Office; Allison Deuel, Public Affairs Office; David Greenwood, Chemical Demilitarization Directorate; Norris Hudnall,

Engineering Directorate; Jonathan Pace, Engineering Directorate; Jeremy Pacillo, Professional Development Support Center; Rachel Sawyers, Engineering Directorate; Aaron Scott, Engineering Directorate; Brian Spear, Engineering Directorate; Jenna Whisenant, Executive Office; and Gary Endicott, Contracting Directorate.



US Army Corps  
of Engineers

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## BULLETIN

Commander..... Col. Larry D. McCallister  
Chief, Public Affairs..... Kim Gillespie  
Editor..... Becky Proaps

## What is your favorite CFC charity and why?



Arkie Fanning  
Engineering Directorate  
Cost Engineering

My favorite CFC charity is St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. My niece had a particularly savage cancer when she was 3 years old. St. Jude provided all medical services and many other services free of charge to my niece and her family. She is now a healthy and happy mother of two. This could not have happened without the support of Saint Jude.

The American Diabetes Association is my favorite charity. I have a sister with Type II diabetes, and she controls it through diet and exercise. I hope my donation can provide needed funds to assist in finding a cure for diabetes some day.



Dorothy Lewis  
Engineering Directorate



Wanda Griffin  
Safety Office

My favorite CFC charity is the ALS Foundation/Association. My dad died with ALS at the age of 56. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), sometimes called Lou Gehrig's disease, is a fatal neurological disease that attacks the nerve cells responsible for controlling voluntary muscles. Eventually, it affects a person's ability to control the muscles needed to move, speak, eat and breathe. Most people with ALS die from respiratory failure, usually within three to five years from the onset of symptoms. However, about 10 percent of those individuals with ALS survive for 10 or more years. ALS first gained widespread public attention in the United States in 1939, when it ended the career of Hall of Fame baseball player Lou Gehrig of the New York Yankees. The cause of ALS is not known.

## Commander

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into a more relevant and ready force. The Corps of Engineers' mission complements the Army mission: win the Global War on Terrorism, enhance the economy of the U.S. and the natural environment. We are doing all of these both directly with our programs and in partnership with other Corps organizations.

As October and the new fiscal year begins, our challenge is to keep up the pace and the quality of our work. The opportunity is for us to reinforce how valuable we are to the Army and the Corps. So we begin October on a high note — meeting the challenge. Thanks for the super job you are doing.

**Col. Larry McCallister will hold  
Town Hall meetings Oct. 5 to kick off  
the NSPS implementation.**

**There are 3 meetings scheduled:**

**8:30 a.m. - First Floor**

**10:00 a.m. - Second Floor**

**12:00 p.m. - Third Floor**

**(Note: These are new times)**

**The meetings will be in the cafeteria.  
Please be seated before the start time.**

**Come hungry. The CFC Committee will  
be hosting a Bake Sale with lots of  
goodies for you to buy and enjoy.**



**Employees are  
encouraged  
to attend.**

# Huntsville Center civil engineer selected for local Chamber professional organization

“I was elated to find out that I was selected by the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce to participate.” This was Arnesia Bradley’s reaction to being named as one of the newest members of the Connect Class 4, a leadership program sponsored by the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce.

Bradley, a civil engineer in the Civil Structures Division, Site Development Branch, Huntsville Center, was nominated by John Moran, a fellow member of the Society of American Military Engineers and a young professional already in Connect.

Leadership Huntsville/Madison County has five programs designed to identify, educate and inspire leaders to serve in the community. Connect is the newest program and designed for young professionals. It provides them with the skills and connections to start on the path to becoming a community

leader.

“Being involved with this program will help me develop my skills as a young professional and help create great networking opportunities,” Bradley said. “This is a remarkable

program in which only a few young professionals are selected. More than 40 individuals applied to the program. I believed in this program so much when I was selected that I decided to pay my own tuition. I truly believe this will be an experience like no other.”

During the next six months, members of the program will learn about

their community’s issues and challenges and be introduced to a variety of community leaders who are helping to shape the future. They will do this by participating in an opening orientation, two mandatory overnight retreats and five class days (one each month), focusing on connecting the self with others, to the past, present, future and with change.



Courtesy photo

**Arnesia Bradley**

## Results of survey steer direction

The Huntsville Center Bulletin conducted a readership survey in June to gain information on reader opinion regarding the newsletter. In all, 39 people, including employees and retirees, responded, most with favorable comments.

Most of the people who responded read every issue, read it cover to cover and think the *Bulletin* is a reliable source of news. Most think the photography, the readability and the overall look of the *Bulletin* is excellent. Although the *Bulletin* is now available on the Huntsville Center Web site at [www.hnd.usace.army.mil](http://www.hnd.usace.army.mil), 31 of the 39 employees want to continue receiving the hard-copy version.

A few individuals requested more focus on Huntsville Center employees; therefore we will be including the names of new employees coming to the Center and names of individuals who have left the Center. We will also be including feature stories about employees on a regular basis.

Thank you for your interest in the *Bulletin*. If you have an idea for a story, please contact the Public Affairs Office.

## Chemical Materials Agency eliminates half of munitions in stockpile

The U.S. Army’s Chemical Materials Agency (CMA) reached a significant milestone Aug. 29 — eliminating half of the total number of munitions in the national stockpile of chemical weapons. Since operations began in 1990, the Army has destroyed more than 1.7 million munitions.

The stockpile includes bombs, rockets, mortars, projectiles, land mines and spray tanks filled with nerve agents GB (Sarin) and VX, plus blister agents H, HD and HT (mustard).

CMA has operating disposal sites in Utah, Alabama, Oregon, Indiana and Arkansas. The stockpiles at Johnston Atoll

and Maryland have been eliminated.

CMA is partnered with the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA) program to achieve destruction of the total stockpile. ACWA will dispose of the chemical weapons at Pueblo, Colo., and Richmond, Ky.; CMA is responsible for storage at

those sites.

The first mustard agent-filled munition was punched and drained Aug. 18, signaling the beginning of the last major destruction campaign at the U.S. Army’s Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility at Deseret Chemical Depot.

(This information from the CMA Web site.)

# Army proposes new barricade standards that will save millions of dollars

By Andrea Takash  
Public Affairs Office

It was standing-room only at the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board seminar when a Huntsville Center engineer announced that her findings on the height of barricades will save DoD millions of dollars.

“Current requirements for the height of a barricade between two ammunition and explosives (AE) stacks are causing construction and operational challenges,” said Dr. Michelle Crull, a professional engineer and senior civil engineer in the Advanced Technology Branch. “The team’s findings could save DoD \$1.9 million in soil alone at one site.”

Barricades are designed to prevent the simultaneous spread of explosions between two stacks of ammunition and explosives due to low-angle, high-velocity fragments. The barricade height is determined by the line-of-sight between two AE stacks.

“In 1974, DoD changed the barricade height requirements,” Crull said. “The new requirement stated that a straight line drawn from the far edge of the top of a bomb at a 2-degree angle above the horizontal must at least pass below the 3-foot wide crest of the standard earth barricade.”

These requirements are still in place today and present three major issues, Crull said.

“There are construction difficulties due to the height

of the barricades. One typical site contains pads that are 134 feet by 48 feet and require 13.6-foot-tall barricades to store eight-foot-tall stacks. There are also real estate issues due to the amount of land required for berms,” Crull said. “The cost is also an issue. This site has 54 of these pads requiring 281,000 cubic yards of soil for berms.”

Crull joined with several other people in DoD to analyze the requirement for the height of barricades.

“I spent hours brainstorming with the people in the Test Management Division at the U.S. Army Technical Center for Explosives Safety,” she said. “I also worked closely with Mike Swisdak, Naval Surface Warfare Center —

Indian Head, Md.; Kevin Hager, Naval Facilities Engineering Service Center — Port Hueneme, Calif.; and Kevin Carr, Air Force Safety Center, N.M.”

After 10 months of studying and testing, the team came up with a proposal for a new design height for barricades.

“We concluded that there can be a change to the design height of barricades to prevent a simultaneous spread of explosions between two stacks of AE in the open. The reference point should be at the top of the stack at the far edge of the donor pad from the barricade. The barricade height must be at least one foot above the line-of-sight between the reference point and the top of the acceptor stack,” she said.

Crull said this proposal would save DoD a tremendous amount of money without reducing safety standards.

“At the site discussed above, the current required barricade height is 13.6 feet and requires 281,000 cubic yards of soil. The proposed barricade height is nine feet and requires only 154,764 cubic yards of soil. This new height would mean a 45 percent reduction in soil alone,” she said.

Based on this study, the Department of the Army plans to request a change to the DoD Ammunition and Explosives Safety Standard.



Photo by Andrea Takash

Dr. Michelle Crull speaks with Paul Miller, a senior staff scientist with Gradient Technology, at the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board seminar.

# Two Center employees spend quality time with Welsh children

By Michelle Harlan  
Public Affairs Office

When Valerie Clinkenbeard and Gina Elliott chaperoned a group of youth ministers from the Fayetteville, Tenn., Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church to southern Wales in the United Kingdom this July, they did not expect the relationships and memories they would bring home with them.

Clinkenbeard, division chief of Electronic Technology, Project Management Directorate, and Elliott, from the Value Engineering Office, Engineering Directorate, spent 11 days this summer at the Jerusalem Baptist Church in Pentrebach, Wales, where they helped prepare meals and assist the American youth.

Their group was sponsored by the World Mission and included participants from several different southeastern Christian organizations. The youth from Clinkenbeard and Elliott's church led the Welsh youth in different activities, such as games, storytelling and singing during their stay.

"Our day started at 7 in the morning and didn't end until 1 the next morning," Clinkenbeard said. They spent a lot of time in the kitchen where a large window looked out onto a courtyard at the church where they stayed. The local children would stick their heads through the open window to ask Clinkenbeard and Elliott for food or see if they could help.

"They wanted to be needed," Elliott said. "We used the local teens as much as we could. We would let them hand out snacks and water to the youngest children or vacuum the sanctuary where we slept at night." When the two women were not sure how to prepare a local item for a cookout, one boy in



Courtesy photo

**Gina Elliott, second from the left, back row, and Valerie Clinkenbeard, second from the right, back row, gather with children from their local Alabama church and children from Pentrebach, Wales, after a spirited game of football.**

particular helped them out. "Josh cooked all the food because he knew how to cook it," Clinkenbeard said.

The local youth eagerly arrived at the church an hour and a half before the first scheduled morning program. "There was nothing else for them to look forward to all summer. (The program) meant so much to them," Elliott said.

"We would play four-square with them in the parking lot while our youth finished setting up," Clinkenbeard said. "I loved being with the (Welsh) kids. Anytime I could, I'd go outside to be with them."

"The area has a huge number of single-parent homes, and the children are left alone without much adult contact," Elliott said. "The little kids are influenced by the older kids, and that's not the best influence. The kids take care of each other."

"It doesn't get dark until 10 p.m., so they stay out at night," Clinkenbeard

said. "It was shocking to see young children without adults. We were there for one week and maybe saw a half dozen parents drop off or pick up their children."

"The kids don't seem to get one on one attention," Clinkenbeard said. "We saw 80 kids, aged 3 to 18 over the week. The only interaction they had with adults was in the church."

"The children are very deep thinkers and mature for their age," both said. "They wanted to know about our families back home," Elliott said. "They are just so desperate for this attention."

"We felt like we really made a difference in their lives, even in the short time we were there," Clinkenbeard said. The church will go back again next year, but the two women do not know if they will go with the group.

"We've thought about going back on our own," Elliott said. "Neither of us expected to get so close to these children."

# Center participates in Adventures in Engineering Day

**T**he U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville participated in the 6th annual Adventures in Engineering Day Sept. 20.

The event was geared for area high school juniors who are interested in pursuing college degrees in science and engineering. More than 150 students from Huntsville, Madison, Madison County, Limestone County and Arab high schools attended.

Huntsville Center employees, Tommy Hunt, the Geographic Information Systems team leader, and Scott Rider, an Ordnance and Explosive safety specialist, volunteered to teach the

students about locating munitions.

"After a brief explanation about unexploded ordnance and the equipment we use to locate the munitions, we set the kids on a path with a magnetic locator called a schonstedt to locate buried timber spikes. Their mission was to locate the items and mark the area with a flag," Hunt said. "I think they really enjoyed the hands-on experience. I stressed to them the importance of pursuing a career field that they like because they will spend one-third of their life at work."

The U.S. Army Space

and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command, Aviation and Missile Research Development and Engineering Center, NASA — Marshall Space Flight Center, Missile and Space Intelligence Center, and Junior Achievement of Northern Alabama also participated.

(Right) Samantha Hair, right, daughter of Kathy Hair, contract specialist with Huntsville Center, and Samantha's teammate, Arianna Ionas, find one of the buried timber spikes.



Caleb Light (left), son of Steve Light, chief of Alternative Technologies Branch, Chem Demil, works with his team to locate and mark the buried timber spikes.



Photos by Andrea Takash

Scott Rider, an ordnance and explosives safety specialist, teaches students how to locate items with a schonstedt, a magnetic locator.



Tommy Hunt, Geographic Information Systems team leader, explains his professional background to area high school students during Adventures in Engineering Day Sept. 20.

# Huntsville has several Corps of Engineers offices

**By Andrea Takash  
Public Affairs Office**

**T**he U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' family extends far outside the doors of the Huntsville Engineering and Support Center and includes several other offices in North Alabama, each with a distinct and separate mission.

Huntsville Center's missions are global in nature, whereas Corps districts, like Nashville and Mobile, are bound to a defined region.

Mobile District's Regional Area Office on Redstone Arsenal manages military construction in portions of three states — Alabama, Tennessee

managing on Redstone. They recently started working on new buildings for the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Not only does the Corps oversee military projects but it also maintains the responsibility to protect the nation's navigable waters through its regulatory program. The Corps uses parts of three legislative authorities: Rivers and Harbors Act; Clean Waters Act; and the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act.

Nashville District's Western Regulatory Field Office, based in Decatur, Ala., has permitting responsibility for the Tennessee River,

piers. While, Section 404 addresses placing fill in the waters of the United States, such as boat ramps and bank stabilization.

"Our biggest challenge is protecting wetlands. Some new subdivisions being constructed have wetlands within them or adjacent to them," Monroe said. "Not everyone sees these as a resource that provides water purification, flood storage and habitat for wildlife. Some see a potential home site that needs to be filled in so the water will drain. But we look at every project and decide what is more advantageous to the public and can be authorized in accordance with the regulations."

"If you know of anyone with questions regarding permits along the rivers or streams, please call the Western Regulatory Field Office at 256-350-5620," Monroe said.

Huntsville is also home to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Learning Center (ULC), formerly known as the Professional Development Support Center, operated by Corps Headquarters.

"Along with the name change to better reflect our mission, ULC has aligned all Proponent Sponsored Engineer Corps Training with the Corps' Communities of Practice (CoP). Each CoP is represented by a specific learning adviser on the ULC staff," said Gary Andrew, director of the ULC.

"This alignment provides CoP leaders with a highly trained educational professional to assist them with identifying and meeting the learning needs of members of the CoP."

For those who can't travel to Huntsville, the ULC holds classes in various places across the world and offers online courses. Courses range from budget training to concrete fundamentals and the length varies.

To learn more about the ULC, please visit the Web site at <http://pdsc.usace.army.mil> or call the registrar team at 256-895-7421/7425.



Photo by Andrea Takash

**Mobile District's Regional Area Office on Redstone Arsenal is responsible for military construction. They are managing the construction of the 230,000 square-foot, second phase of the Von Braun complex that will house the Missile Defense Agency in 2007.**

and Mississippi — and oversees two project offices and three resident offices. Thirty permanently assigned employees work for the area office on a variety of projects ranging from construction of test facilities to environmental restoration.

"Right now our biggest project on Redstone is the 230,000 square-foot Von Braun building, which will house 900 to 1,000 employees from the Missile Defense Agency," said Steve Arendale, area engineer. "This is the second building of five that will comprise the Von Braun campus. We anticipate finishing building two in May 2007."

The Von Braun project is only one of many projects the area office is

Elk River and 10 lakes, two of which are in Tennessee. Mobile District has responsibility for everything south of the Tennessee River drainage basin.

"We cover a large, important area out of this office," said David Monroe, manager of the Western Regulatory Field Office. "There are three of us, Eric Sinclair, Gary Davis and myself, who can review and issue permits. We usually average 20 permits a piece at one time. It takes about 30 to 45 days to issue a permit."

Most permit requests are for Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and Section 404 of the Clean Waters Act, Monroe said. Section 10 applies to building structures in navigable waters, like construction of boat docks and

# Solar panels

continued from page 1

from Congress through the Military Construction Program. ECIP judges the different projects that installations submit. All the proposals include an economic analysis that includes cost, savings on investment ratio, payback, etc. Other types of projects include increased insulation, high efficiency boilers and motors — basically anything you can replace with a high efficiency device, lighting and direct digital controls.

"ECIP likes funding PV because it is green energy," said Will White, the lead program engineer of the Utility Monitoring and Control System (UMCS) team at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Engineering and Support Center in Huntsville, Ala.

"The workmanship and the engineering on this job impressed me. We finished the job on time and within budget. We actually had some contingency funds that we did not use that we will return to the program. It was in all respects one of the most satisfying and successful jobs I've been associated with. No safety violations, no re-submittals, no unhappy customers ... the guys just worked hard and did all they promised."

Rob Jay, the installation energy manager at Fort Sam Houston, and Gene Rodriguez, Fort Sam Houston's in-house technical consultant for PV systems, submitted the project to ECIP and it was funded in

September 2005. The project was completed seven months later in April 2006.

"Initially our primary objective for going with PV was to try and not exceed the demand charge from City Public Service (CPS), our local utility company," Rodriguez said. "The solar constant is something like 1500 Btu's/square foot/per day. That is a lot of energy going to waste. Our chillers are drawing the most current flow from 3 to 5 p.m., almost matching the peak output of the PV system that it is interfaced with. Due to the reduction in maintenance dollars, a system almost has to be designed for neglect. Our PV system would have to be as close to low maintenance as you can get.

"It hasn't rained much lately in San Antonio, but for the most part an occasional rain is all that's required to keep the collectors clean," Rodriguez said. "But now we're finally starting to pay attention to global warming and national security. Due to soaring oil prices, using a renewable alternate energy source, in this case solar energy that we have in abundance, to achieve energy independence in America not only makes sense but soon may become mandatory. More importantly, this will help procure the long term national security that comes with preserving the environment."

Partners in the project included the installation, the Corps of Engineers Fort Worth District, the Huntsville Center, Williams Electric



Courtesy photo

**Terry Hyatt, left, site superintendent, Williams Electric Company, and David Brearley, NABCEP certified solar PV system installer, discuss the project to install a 180 kilowatt-hour photovoltaic solar panel system on Bldg. 1350 at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.**

Company of Fort Walton Beach, Fla., and Meridian Energy Systems of Austin, Texas.

"We competed the job between our UMCS ID/IQ contractors and received price proposals from three of them," White said. "All the pricing came within 2-3 percent; however, due to the pressure of increased demand for PV panels from higher oil prices, they were all over the government amount allocated. We had to go back to ECIP for more money. Hank Gignilliat at Headquarters in Washington, D.C., was instrumental in getting the additional funding for the project."

The system is fully integrated through controls to produce power onto the energy grid. It is metered and monitored separately from the power provided by the local electric company. The power that is generated from the sun is metered separately and the cumulative kW and dollar savings are

displayed on the monitor in the master control room of the Energy Monitoring and Control System (EMCS). It is helping to reduce the demand cost and base utility cost while helping to meet Army energy goals.

"What is great about the use at Fort Sam Houston is that it provides additional energy for cooling during the peak demand periods," White said. "You get more kilowatts of energy from the solar panels when the sun is the brightest. The solar energy powers the chillers in classrooms, barracks, etc.

"We had a challenge with the panels because from the time the contractor put in the bid to the time he wanted to buy the panels, the price had gone up due to rising costs and demand," White said. "The contractor honored their proposed price and we ended up using a different source for the panels, but the panels were just as good.

"It was a team effort that turned out well," White said.

# NSPS performance appraisal application: Tools available to employees on Web site

The Department of Defense (DoD) has developed a set of online tools to support the Performance Management phase of NSPS. The first of these tools — the performance appraisal application — is now available to employees *who have already converted* to NSPS.

The performance appraisal application facilitates the NSPS performance management process from establishing performance plans to assigning the recommended rating. It supports the NSPS mission by providing an

online venue for regular communication, where supervisors and employees can exchange ideas about work performance, document areas of growth and share ideas regarding job objectives and work plans.

Employees *who have not yet converted* to NSPS may not access and use the performance appraisal application at this time. However, everyone can learn about the tool by going to the NSPS Web site at <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/>

nsps and playing a demonstration of the performance appraisal application or by accessing a printable, text-only document

explaining how the new application works.

More information about the performance appraisal application can also be found on the NSPS Feature Stories page [www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/](http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/)

[feature\\_stories.html](http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/feature_stories.html) and on the NSPS Performance Management page at [www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/performance\\_management.html](http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/performance_management.html).



## Combined Federal Campaign kicks off with words, music

**By Skip Vaughn**  
**Redstone Rocket editor**

**A**re you fired up yet for the Combined Federal Campaign?

That was a continuing theme at the 2006 Tennessee Valley CFC kickoff Sept. 19 at the NASA picnic area. There were personal testimonies from Redstone workers, pep talks from agency leaders, music and food.

"We have some folks that are fired up for CFC," campaign coordinator Donna Johnson told the estimated more than 500 attendees.

The charity drive is scheduled from Oct. 9 through Nov. 17. This year's campaign theme is "Compassion in Action"; and the goal is \$1.8 million.

Last year's campaign surpassed its \$1.8 million goal with \$1,961,541.

"We would like to thank you in advance for your support of CFC and all that you will do to help this year's campaign," Johnson said.

CFC chairman Maj. Gen. Jim Pillsbury, commander of the Aviation and Missile Command and Redstone Arsenal, urged everyone to try for \$2 million in contributions. With tongue in cheek, he threatened to sing if the goal isn't reached.

"I fully support what Donna and her team are doing," the general said.

The Tennessee Valley campaign includes 36 federal agencies and 14,847 employees in six North Alabama counties — Cullman, Lawrence,

Limestone, Madison, Marshall and Morgan — and Lincoln County, Tenn.

Contributions can go to 158 local charities and about 1,800 national and international health, welfare

and human services charities. Only those organizations that employees select or designate will receive their gift. Workers can give through cash, check or payroll deduction.



Photo by Skip Vaughn, Redstone Rocket

**Maj. Gen. Jim Pillsbury, commander of the Aviation and Missile Command and Redstone Arsenal, addresses the crowd at the Combined Federal Campaign kickoff Sept. 19 at the NASA picnic area. He serves as the Tennessee Valley CFC chairman.**

# Civilian News Briefs

## National Security Personnel System training registration deadline Oct. 5

Huntsville Center employee training for NSPS is scheduled in October and November. All employees must be registered in the Civilian Human Resource Training Application System by Oct. 5. This training is mandatory.

## New policy memorandums now available

The following policy memorandums have been updated, signed by Col. Larry D. McCallister, and posted on the Huntsville Center Intranet site: Commander's Safety Policy, Policy Memorandum 06-05; Department of Defense Program for Stability of Civilian Employment, Policy Memorandum 06-06; Employee Assistance Program, Policy Memorandum 06-07; Commander's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy statement, Policy Memorandum 06-08; Receipt of Funds Process, Policy Memorandum 06-09; and Huntsville Center Commander's Policy on Coordination of Matters Affecting the Workforce, Policy Memorandum 06-10. These documents are available at <https://hnc-ws-intra/im/publications/search/Documents>.

## Designation of Beneficiaries

When was the last time you checked your designations of beneficiary forms? Completing beneficiary forms is an option that every civilian employee may choose.

If you do not complete designation of beneficiary forms, benefits will be paid in order of precedence decided by the court.

If you have completed beneficiary forms, it becomes your responsibility to ensure the forms are current. A change in marital status or family status does not automatically change a beneficiary form you previously submitted, nor does it prevent the benefactor from receiving the death benefits you designated.

The most common mistake is when the employee names a spouse and later divorces that spouse but does not change the beneficiary forms. If you decide to file a designation, be sure it remains accurate and reflects your intentions.

There are several types of beneficiary forms you can

complete to designate your benefits after death. These include the SF-1152: Designation of Beneficiary, Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Civilian Employee; the SF-2823: Designation of Beneficiary, Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program (FEGLI); the TSP-3: Designation of Beneficiary, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Employees are responsible for mailing the original form to the TSP Service Office, P.O. Box 385021, Birmingham, AL 35238; the SF-2808: Designation of Beneficiary, Civilian Service Retirement System (CSRS). Employees are responsible for completing the form in duplicate and mailing it to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Retirement Operations Center, P.O. Box 45, Boyers, PA 16017-0045. To verify OPM has a current designation of beneficiary form on file, write to the address above or call 888-767-6738; and the SF-3102: Designation of Beneficiary, Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

If you have filed Designation of Beneficiary forms, make sure they are kept current. You should review your designation annually, and file a new designation as needed. Each form includes detailed instructions for its completion and who you can designate as your beneficiary. You may access these forms electronically by clicking on OPM's Web site at <http://www.opm.gov/forms> for the SF 1152, 2808, 2823 and 3102. You can obtain a copy of the TSP 3 from the TSP home page at <http://www.tsp.gov>. If assistance obtaining or filing any of these forms is necessary, contact Carol Dennis at 895-1899 or Debra Coffey at 895-1366.

## Army Knowledge Online home page gets new look, easy features

Army Knowledge Online launched a new home page Aug. 26 to help users easily navigate the site and find information quickly. Users now see a new design; easier navigation tools like scrolling tabs, drop-down menus and picture icons; important news items on the top of the page and a change in how information is organized. The left navigation bar on the former home page was also removed to allow additional space for content from administrators. Users visiting AKO for the first time since the modification can click on the "AKO Homepage Upgrade Page" link for more information on all the changes. Users can also take an interactive tour of the new home page and look at a cheat sheet which gives a before and after version of the home page.

# **Ethics Corner**

## **What it means when I sign my time sheet**

**By Margaret Simmons  
Office of Counsel**

I bet many of you are wondering how this is a topic for the Ethics column. One of the 14 principles in the Code of Ethics is "Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties." During the annual ethics training, I'm sure you have all heard me say that a government employee should give eight hours of work for eight hours of pay. I also say that we know this has to include some time during the day to laugh, to talk with others and to be social. There is no specific amount of time that I can tell you is appropriate for that. I believe that for most employees, those moments happen during the performance of your work.

Your time sheet is your word that you have put in the time that is going to be entered by the timekeeper and certified by your supervisor. Your time sheet should accurately reflect

what time you report to work, what time you take lunch and what time you leave at the end of the day. Most of you are familiar with the Huntsville Center regulation on time. You must be at work between the core hours of 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., or account for your absence by some type of leave. Also, you have to show at least 30 minutes for lunch between the hours of 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. whether you actually go to lunch or not. If there is an exception to this, you need to talk to your supervisor on how it should be documented on the time sheet.

Many folks in the building smoke. There is no such thing as an approved break for any employee in Huntsville Center, including a smoke break. Structured breaks are designed for workers who are on assembly lines, or who are not allowed to get up and go to the bathroom as nature requires. Each employee here has the freedom to determine when they need to get up from their desks/cubicles, and get

water, go to the bathroom or go smoke. Any person is allowed a reasonable amount of time to move around from their chair. Most employees understand and respect these rules. Some employees have a perception that a handful of folks stay at the smoking gazebo most of the day. If there is an issue with this, then it is the supervisor's responsibility to deal with it. A supervisor's certification of a time sheet is the supervisor's word that they concur that the employee has worked the hours that are put in the system, based on the time sheet.

Huntsville Center is comprised of a professional work force. For the most part, we follow the rules. I thank each of you for that and ask that you be aware of what you are doing and how you are reflecting that on your time sheet. Do your job and have a little fun along the way. And at the end of each day, remember to reflect your day on your time sheet.

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